

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing Of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A load-lock system comprising:
a load-lock chamber arranged between a storage port which stores a substrate and a process chamber which processes the substrate in a process space maintained at a pressure lower than a pressure in the outside; [[and]]
a dehumidifying unit which supplies dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber[[,]]; and
an exhaust unit which exhausts a gas in said load-lock chamber,
wherein said dehumidifying unit forms a dehumidified atmosphere in said load-lock chamber by supplying said dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber before said exhaust unit exhausts the gas in said load-lock chamber.

Claim 2 (original). A system according to claim 1, wherein said dehumidifying unit has a controller which controls a humidity in said load-lock chamber so as to prevent moisture in said load-lock chamber from condensing when a temperature in said load-lock chamber drops.

Claim 3 (original). A system according to claim 1, wherein said dehumidifying unit has a pipe which communicates with said load-lock chamber, a cooler and a heater placed in the pipe, and a controller separately controls the cooler and heater.

Claim 4 (original): A system according to claim 1, wherein said dehumidifying unit has a filter for removing moisture, the filter being arranged between the cooler and the heater in the pipe.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A load-lock system comprising:
a load-lock chamber arranged between a storage port which stores a substrate and a process chamber which processes the substrate in a process space maintained at a pressure lower than a pressure in the outside;
a machine chamber arranged between said storage port and said load-lock chamber[.];
a dehumidifying unit which supplies dehumidified gas into said machine chamber[.]; and
an exhaust unit which exhausts a gas in said load-lock chamber,
wherein said dehumidifying unit forms a dehumidified atmosphere in said load-lock chamber by supplying said dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber before said exhaust unit exhausts the gas in said load-lock chamber.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A system according to claim 5, wherein said dehumidifying unit has a controller which controls a humidity in said machine chamber so as to prevent moisture in said load-lock chamber from condensing when a temperature in said load-lock chamber drops.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A system according to claim 6, wherein the controller calculates a humidity in said load-lock chamber and the humidity in said machine chamber, and said dehumidifying unit controls the humidity in said machine chamber so as to prevent moisture in gas flowing from said machine chamber into said load-lock chamber from condensing when the temperature in said load-lock chamber drops, on the basis of a calculation result by the controller.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A system according to claim 5, wherein said dehumidifying unit has a pipe which communicates with said machine chamber, a cooler and a heater placed in the pipe, and a controller separately controls the cooler and heater.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A system according to claim 5, further comprising a static eliminator which eliminates static electricity in said machine chamber.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A system according to claim 5, wherein said machine chamber includes a transport portion which transports the substrate between said storage port and said load-lock chamber.

Claim 11 (currently amended): An exposure processing system comprising:

a storage port which stores a substrate;

an exposure processing unit which exposes the substrate in a process space maintained at a pressure lower than a pressure in the outside;

a load-lock chamber arranged between said storage port and said exposure processing unit; [[and]]

a dehumidifying unit which supplies dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber[[.]]; and

an exhaust unit which exhausts a gas in said load-lock chamber,

wherein said dehumidifying unit forms a dehumidified atmosphere in said load-lock chamber by supplying said dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber before said exhaust unit exhausts the gas in said load-lock chamber.

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (currently amended): An exposure processing system comprising:

a storage port which stores a substrate;

an exposure processing unit which exposes the substrate in a process space maintained at a pressure lower than a pressure in the outside;

a load-lock chamber arranged between said storage port and said exposure processing unit;

a mini-environment arranged between said storage port and said load-lock chamber[[.]]; and

a dehumidifying unit which supplies dehumidified gas into said mini-environment[[.]]; and

an exhaust unit which exhausts a gas in said load-lock chamber,

wherein said dehumidifying unit forms a dehumidified atmosphere in said load-lock chamber by supplying said dehumidified gas into said load-lock chamber before said exhaust unit exhausts the gas in said load-lock chamber.

Claim 14 (original): A device manufacturing method comprising:
an exposure step of exposing a substrate using an exposure processing system as defined in claim 11; and
a development step of developing the exposed substrate.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A device manufacturing method comprising:
an exposure step of exposing a substrate using an exposure processing system as defined in claim 13; and
a development step of developing the exposed substrate.